

REMARKS

This is in response to the Office Action dated March 7, 2007.

Claims 1, 2, 12 and 26-31 stand rejected under Section 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Mamiya in view of Allen (US 5,764,322). This Section 103(a) rejection is respectfully traversed for at least the following reasons.

Claim 1 requires that “the lightguide element includes a polarization selection layer for causing light of a specific polarization direction, among the light incident from the incidence surface, to selectively go out from the outgoing surface, and a *polarization conversion layer for converting light of a polarization direction, different from the specific polarization direction, into the light of the specific polarization direction; the polarization selection layer reflects the light of the specific polarization direction substantially only toward the outgoing surface, and wherein at least part of the polarization conversion layer is substantially parallel to the polarization selection layer, and wherein the polarization conversion layer is a phase plate and is formed of a transparent material having birefringence.*” For example and without limitation, Fig. 1 of the instant application illustrates that polarization conversion layer 24 is substantially parallel to polarization selection layer 22.

The cited art fails to disclose or suggest the above italicized features of claim 1. Mamiya fails to disclose or suggest the claimed polarization conversion layer which converts light of one polarization to another polarization, and at least part of which is substantially parallel to the polarization selection layer. In particular, glass substrate 120 in Fig. 8 of Mamiya, relied on by the Office Action, does not convert light of one polarization to another polarization as required by claim 1. This substrate 120 in Mamiya is entirely unrelated to the polarization conversion layer recited in claim 1, and is simply not a polarization conversion layer.

Likewise, in contrast to the allegations in the Office Action, cavity 230 in Fig. 2 of Allen (relied on by the Examiner) also is not a polarization conversion layer. Cavity 230 in Allen does not convert light of one polarization to another polarization. Thus, citation to Allen does not overcome the aforesaid flaws of Mamiya. Accordingly, even the alleged combination (which would be incorrect in any event) fails to meet the invention of claim 1.

The other independent claims appear to define over the cited art in a similar manner.

Moreover, claims 1, 3, 31 and 32 have been amended to more clearly distinguish the claimed polarization conversion layer from cavity 230 in Fig. 2 of Allen. Claims 1, 3, 31 and 32 as amended require that the the polarization conversion layer is a phase plate and is formed of a transparent material having birefringence. In the case where the polarization conversion layer is a phase plate, the slow axis thereof is generally uniform in a plane parallel to the outgoing surface in certain example embodiments of this invention. Accordingly, the efficiency at which the light is converted into the light of the specific polarization direction is generally uniform in a plane parallel to the outgoing surface. Thus, it is easier to provide a design in which the light of the specific polarization direction goes out substantially uniformly from the outgoing surface (e.g., see pg. 39, lines 8-17, of the instant specification). Also, the conversion of light of one polarization into another can be efficiently performed. Because the cavity 230 of Allen is not a phase plate, the efficiency of alleged polarization conversion is extremely low. Claims 17 and 34 also require that polarization conversion layer is a phase plate, which is not disclosed or suggested in the cited art.

The Office Action appears to allege that Cornelissen teaches that the polarization conversion layer is a phase plate 21. This allegation is wrong. The phase plate 21 in Fig. 1 of Cornelissen is provided in order to match the polarization direction of light emitted from the exit

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surface 9 of the light guide 8 to the direction of the transmission axis of the polarizer 14.

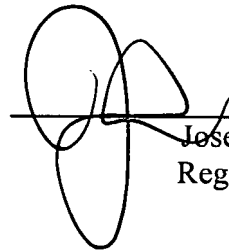
Therefore, the phase plate 21 in Cornelissen is similar to a phase plate described at pg. 73, line 18 to pg. 74, line 2, of the instant application, and is not the polarization conversion layer required by claims 1, 3, 31 and 32.

It is respectfully requested that all rejections be withdrawn. All claims are in condition for allowance. If any minor matter remains to be resolved, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned with regard to the same.

Respectfully submitted,

NIXON & VANDERHYE P.C.

By:

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'J' and 'R' intertwined, followed by a horizontal line.

Joseph A. Rhoa
Reg. No. 37,515

JAR:caj
901 North Glebe Road, 11th Floor
Arlington, VA 22203-1808
Telephone: (703) 816-4000
Facsimile: (703) 816-4100